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POLITICS

AND

THE PULPIT;

AN ESSAY

ON THE

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN PULPIT
IN RELATION TO POLITICS.

BY

A MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

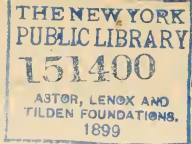
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INTRODUCTION.

THE following essay was submitted for examination in behalf of the author, by the intervention of respectable clergymen in another State. They accompanied the manuscript with the following remarks:

"This manuscript was prepared by an eminent minister of the Old School Presbyterian Church. From a wish to have the argument stand on its own merits, and from a reluctance to have his name appear either to help or to hinder its circulation and usefulness, he has chosen to remain unknown. But he has submitted the manuscript to the judgment of the subscribers, that we may make such use of it as shall seem to us desirable.

"After carefully reading the work, we are satisfied that it possesses decided merit, and is deserving of publication. We recommend it to the American Tract Society at Boston, as a work worthy of their attention and adoption. We are sure that it contains sentiments and arguments admirably adapted to meet a present want of the ministers and Christians of this land."

This essay is itself but an introduction to another, entitled "Slavery and the Pulpit," by the same author. But it appears to be, apart from that, so important and so timely, at a period when the pulpit is alternately threatened and flattered that it may maintain a treacherous silence respecting our national sins, that it has been thought advisable to issue this by itself. The author being a clergyman of a denomination which has no official, and

almost no personal connection with this Society, it can not be supposed to be published from any sectional or denominational bias. His having, as he declares, once been an earnest apologist for slavery, shows him to have no hereditary prejudices against the system.

As an earnest Christian discussion of a momentous subject just now assuming great practical importance, it is commended to all the friends — and enemies, too, — of a Free Press, Free Speech, and a Pulpit responsible only to him who gave it authority to speak in his name. We are sure that its unadorned simplicity of style will not detract from the favor with which it will be received by all who love the simplicity of Christian Truth.

The second part, on slavery, will shortly be issued, when the two will be bound in one volume, entitled “The Pulpit in its relations to Politics and Slavery.”

BOSTON, January, 1860.

POLITICS AND THE PULPIT.

THE question proposed for the present discussion is this:

WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THE PULPIT TO POLITICS?

It is manifest that the solution of this question must depend on the precise meaning of the term politics. That it may mean what lies out of the range of the pulpit's relations and duties, is not disputed. That it may mean also what comes within the field of its obligations, is equally unquestionable. The first step to be taken, then, in answer to the question, is to settle the meaning of politics.

Politics presents itself in three points of view.

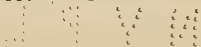
1. In the first view, politics embraces the science and administration of government in matters *purely secular, in which no question of moral principle is involved*. These are finance, revenue, currency, diplomacy, and official appointments, together with municipal and commercial regulations; also measures of mere human opinion or unsettled experiment. These features of politics, or what may be called its civil, secular, or municipal affairs, are but the ripples and eddies upon the surface of a mighty sea.

To these, so far as they involve no question of moral principle, the pulpit has no particular relation or duty. And if these matters alone were concerned, political agitations might well be left to spend themselves, and subside with the squalls by which they are raised into ephemeral importance. The best thing the pulpit can do, is, to keep

silence, and let the storm pass by. It would be equally degrading and futile for it to meddle with these temporary agitations, in which it could hope to do no good, and might do much evil. The pulpit, in such cases, ought to say, with its divine Lord, "Who made me a judge or divider over you?" "Let the dead bury their dead." It ought distinctly and scrupulously to recognize the principle announced by the King of Zion: "My kingdom is not of this world." It has nothing to do with secular politics and party contests. It has no vocation to legislate, judge, or execute in civil affairs. It can not consistently interfere with the operation of the powers ordained of God for the administration of civil government. This is the field, exclusively, of the legislator and the magistrate. All that the pulpit has to say in this regard, is: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

2. But politics has not only a surface, it has also depths. In these depths lie concealed powers and agencies, that, in an orderly and quiet state, are incalculably beneficial, but which are liable to be wrought into tempestuous and destructive fury; into heavings and tossings, which no human power can control or resist. In these depths are shoals and rocks; along their shores are breakers and reefs, which, encountered in a storm, leave but a wreck behind.

These depths of politics are the *moral principles and practices* which constitute the vitals of good society among men, and on which all the essential interests of a community, all the safety, peace and prosperity of a nation depend. Let these be orderly, quiet, and duly operative, and all is well. It is of comparatively little consequence who administers the government, who wears the honor or who sustains the burdens of office. If the moral foundation stands firm, the state is safe; the people are free and happy. A political struggle may ruffle the surface,



and produce temporary agitation; but if the fountains of the great deep be not broken up, calm and sunshine will soon follow. But let the depths, the moral depths of society be reached and moved; let the ground-swell begin its surgings, and who can calculate the results?

That politics, or the real essential interests of society, have such depths, none will deny. How can it be otherwise, when all legitimate government is from God; when the powers that be are ordained of God, and all magisterial authority is based on a divine grant, and sanctioned by a divine command, as is now acknowledged by all civilized and Christian nations? Government is not a mere engine of physical power in which might is right, but a divine institution for the administering of justice, for the security of equal rights, and especially for the protection of the weak and defenseless.

Here we come to the second point of view in which politics is presented. "Politics," says Dr. Webster, "is that part of ethics which consists in the regulation of a nation or state, for the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity." Ethics, as defined by the same author, includes "the doctrines of morality; the science of moral philosophy; a system of moral principles; a system of rules for regulating the actions of men." Put these two definitions into one, and the following result appears: Politics, in one standard meaning, is *a system of moral principles and rules for regulating the actions of men, so as to secure the safety, peace and prosperity of a nation or state.*

That this is a correct definition of politics, in what may be called its moral and permanent relations, is evident from the very idea of government.

Government is a divine institution, designed to secure the safety, peace, and prosperity of society. But moral rules, principles, and practice are indispensable to the safety, peace, and prosperity of society. Therefore, poli-

tics, as an element of human government, includes moral principles and practice.

This truth is so essential to the discussion in hand, and, withal, so foreign to the ordinary apprehension of men, in regard to the import of politics, that it can not in justice be dismissed, without a more particular and extended notice.

It is not then admissible, as a hypothesis, that such an institution as civil government, from such a source as divine authority, and for such ends as the safety, peace and prosperity of human society, would have no respect to moral principles; that it would provide no safeguards for the rights of the various constituent members of society; that it would prescribe no duties of subjects to rulers, or of rulers to subjects; that it would set no bounds, or give no checks to power; that it would sanction tyranny and oppression on the one hand, or sedition and rebellion on the other. It is not to be supposed that God has annulled the principles of his own moral government in the deputed, derived authority of his subalterns; that he holds rulers to no accountability; that he has provided no means or instruments for the admonition and reproof both of rulers and the ruled.

Just as surely as that moral principles and rules constitute an essential element of man's safety and well being in society, so surely is provision made in the divine institution of government, that these shall be taught and enforced. To suppose the contrary is to suppose a divine institution founded in inconsistency, and fatally deficient in the means of self-preservation.

If any question arises as to the proper limits of these reciprocal duties, the appeal lies to the eternal principles of moral obligation and of the moral law, revealed in the Word of God. If any party, in the great social and political organization, chooses to assume the responsibility of trampling that law under feet, of violating rights or

inflicting injuries ; and if the matter can not be adjusted in this present imperfect state, the appeal lies to the tribunal of Omniscience, and will be adjusted in the world to come. But that the God of moral government has incorporated the principles of that government in the subordinate and delegated governments of men, is no more to be doubted, than that he is the author of human government.

And while all this is true, and evident from a consideration of the office of civil government in relation to the interests of the present life, it is still more evident in relation to the interests of man as an immortal being, and as having need of the provisions and invitations of the gospel.

That the present life is preparatory to the future, all will admit. Whatever then is safe or salutary in respect to the life that now is, must take into account and keeping the interests of man, as an accountable being, and tend to train him for future blessedness ; or at least must be consistent with such a design. It is not to be supposed that a government derived from God, would be based on atheism or immorality, or that it would be destitute of the principles of godliness ; or, in other words, that he would so constitute civil government that any thing consistent with the best interests of society, should be inconsistent with that godliness which has promise of both the present and the future life. Nor can there be any thing in the gospel and politics inconsistent with each other ; for the gospel of salvation, while it gives glory to God in the highest, proclaims "on earth peace, good will toward men." The gospel, then, in its moral features and influence, is an essential element of true politics. And this appears the more evident when we reflect on the fact that sin is as much the enemy of society as of individual happiness ; and the gospel is the enemy and conqueror of sin. And if the gospel does not depend on civil govern-

ment for its support and success, yet civil government, in any desirable form, does depend on the gospel. If civil government is not an appointed or direct means of promulgating and inculcating the gospel, yet the gospel is an appointed and necessary means of sustaining civil government. To preach the gospel therefore in all its parts, is to preach politics; and, *vice versa*, to preach politics, in the true sense, is included in preaching the gospel.

Moreover, as the design of the gospel is to save men from their sins, rather than in them, it can not be faithfully preached, without aiming directly and with all its power to produce practical piety and morality in every station and relation of life; and consequently without rebuking all impiety and immorality. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus 2: 11, 12.)

The gospel can not be preached to men consistently with a license, express or implied, to continue in any kind of sin. It can not be consistently said to men; "Come to Christ as individual persons, and not as members of the community: come as private persons, and not as public officers, rulers, or politicians: follow Christ in the management of your private affairs, be truthful and honest in your personal transactions, and not as members of a party, as candidates for office, or in those public political measures in which you share responsibility with others."

The gospel, if preached at all in truth and faithfulness, must be preached as a law of universal holiness, as well as a method of free and full salvation. Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill. An apostle has said; "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."

As the gospel then is a confirmation of the moral law,

and as the principles of the moral law enter vitally into all correct politics, to preach politics, in the true sense, is to preach the gospel. And as all unjust and intentionally injurious political measures are infractions of the moral law, to preach the gospel is to expose and rebuke all such politics. The two things are inseparable in their nature; and the attempt to separate them in practice is a manifest evasion of duty.

Besides, it is not to be forgotten that politics, in all its different branches, phases, and measures, is administered by moral and accountable agents. The politician, be he high or low, great or small, official or unofficial, is amenable to God for all his motives and doings, as much as any other man; as much so for his political conduct, as for any thing else. In vain does he think to hide himself in the labyrinth of party, or by "following a multitude to do evil." The eye of God marks all his ways; the law of God reaches to his secret thoughts, and misses not one of them; and the justice of God will exact the penalty due to his political sins, except he repent of them.

The saying that "all is fair in politics," appears to be regarded by many as a maxim, but it can proceed from none but an immoral source. It has no countenance or allowance in the moral code. A political falsehood is nevertheless a lie, and will come home at last to its author. Political injustice, fraud, slander, oppression, and robbery are personal crimes in the sight of God; whose book of remembrance will set them in order before the transgressors. And if all the malignant passions expressed in those angry words, those bloody feuds and brawls which often mark a political campaign; if all the misrepresentations and detractions uttered by the political press; if all the bribes, false oaths, and intrigue used for political ends; if all the property, reputation, and life sacrificed for political purposes, are to be accounted for at the bar of God, and to meet their just recompense of reward at the hand of

eternal justice, what a scene of moral corruption will be exhibited in the judgment-day, as found in the field of practical politics! Does any one believe this field to lie outside of the moral domain of Jehovah; left to the unrestrained development of human depravity? Is it a field on which the light of divine truth is never to shine; where every crime is to find a sanctuary? Is the field of politics exempt from moral responsibility; have its occupants no need of restraint or rebuke, and no concern with moral instruction? Is it an outlawed corner of the moral universe, to which men may go, to trample on the laws of God and the rights of man with impunity; and from which, having finished their vile work, they may have free regress, unquestioned and unreprieved, to the bosom of virtuous society, and even of the church of Christ?

If this is not so, then all the means and appliances of moral and religious instruction are to be vigorously employed respecting politics; yes, in respect to politics and politicians, *as such*; inasmuch as they are concerned with moral action and responsible agency. And all the more important and indispensable is this application, because politics and politicians are connected with public interests, and draw whole communities in their train. If the actors in political dramas were alone to suffer for their faults, they would be objects of benevolent regard and Christian labor; how much more, when they have the destinies of whole states and nations in their keeping!

Another consideration of weight in showing the need of moral instruction in connection with politics, is the demoralizing influence of political life on those engaged in its agitations and conflicts. Most lamentably does it appear to be true, that men are less cognizant of moral obligation in respect to their political conduct, than any other transactions of life. Many appear to lose all sense of personal identity in the mazes of party organization and intrigue. They are blinded by party interests, and

urged on in party ranks, to do what they would never do in their individual capacity. They lend their aid and influence to sanction measures and gain results, from which, as personal acts, their consciences would recoil with horror. They would stand aghast at the charge of murder, drunkenness, or robbery, if they had a thought that it might lie against them personally. The specter of such crimes would haunt them by day and by night, and drive peace from their bosoms. And yet, in their party measures, under the pressure of party drill, they put their hands to any or all of these crimes, without hesitation. In truth, and in the sight of God, they are guilty of wholesale murder, by sanctioning unjust war. By sustaining measures of violence and oppression, they rob, on a large scale. And, by lending their aid to break down the barriers against vice, they become accomplices in its guilt. And so dense is the cloud of political prejudice in which they are enveloped, they will justify themselves in practices of the greatest enormity. They are exceedingly restless under the influx of light, and jealous of any agency by which their error is exposed. Especially do they cry out under the application of moral tests and standards. These are of all others most disquieting, because moral truth has a penetration and pungency which a political shield will not always intercept. The Bible, the Moral Law, brought into contact with their politics, is an intolerable annoyance. Therefore they are loud in their complaints against bringing the Bible to bear on politics. They can not endure politics from the pulpit; and the reason is obvious. Being indisposed to confess or forsake the evil of their ways, they seek to hide it, at least from themselves, by shutting out the light.

Politics, then, of all subjects, and politicians, of all men, are the most in need of the light of truth; and require the most strenuous and faithful labors to bring it home to their case. If exposure and proneness to fall constitute

a reason for the more vigorous use of preventives or remedies, then political life needs to be watched over, and plied with moral correctives, with the most diligent and persevering faithfulness. If any of the concerns of men must be deprived of the benefits of moral principle, and the instruction needful for its maintenance, let not politics be the exception. For this involves the dearest interests of life, and stands in near and indissoluble relation to the interests of immortality. The attempt often made to separate the preaching of the gospel from preaching politics, is unwarranted and mischievous. Let those who do this tell how the gospel can be preached without preaching what is for the safety, peace and prosperity of a state or nation. If the gospel is not confined to this teaching, it certainly includes it. So that they who talk about preaching the gospel to the exclusion of politics are wise above what is written, and set aside the counsel of God by their traditions.

Such, it is believed, is a true account of politics, in its moral aspects and relations. And if such be the truth, it can not be altered or varied by human opinion or practice. No matter what men generally think of politics, or how much they pervert the thing or misapply the name. Politics has an established character and meaning. It occupies an elevated station among the appointed means of human welfare, and stands on a basis as durable as moral obligation. Doubtless there are points in it, as suggested in our first view, about which men may conscientiously differ; points which involve no moral principle. And the rights of personal judgment in such matters are not to be invaded. At the same time, it by no means follows that all points or questions in politics, or that the most vital of them, are of this description. Directly the reverse of this is undeniably true. The vital points in politics are *moral* questions, involving the principles of duty to God and man; and these are settled and invariable. These

are not only proper, but prescribed topics of public instruction. They are a part of the counsel of God, and can not be omitted without a manifest dereliction of duty.

Having thus shown the nature of politics in this second view of it, let us now consider more particularly the functions and duties of the pulpit in relation to it.

The pulpit is here employed figuratively for the use to which it is consecrated. This use is the promulgation of the Word of God. If that Word takes cognizance of man's political relations, and makes them a part of its teachings and injunctions, the pulpit has an official relation to politics, and can not consistently leave them out from its supervision and its ministrations. But if the Word of God is silent respecting political duties, or expressly prohibits their consideration, as topics of public instruction or animadversion, then the pulpit must be equally silent. The question is simply a question of divine revelation in the premises.

In determining this question, it needs only that we recall what has just been said of moral principles and moral agency as lying at the basis of political action. "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, *and what duty God requires of man.*" If political duties are among those which God requires of man, and for the discharge of which he holds every man accountable, then politics is a part of the word of God, and must be included in the instruction of the pulpit. Moreover, the Bible gives specific directions in many cases.

It prescribes the political qualifications and duties of rulers, and the political duties of the ruled.

In 2 Samuel, xxiii. 3, it is recorded by David as follows: "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me; he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." In the sojourn of the Israelites in

the wilderness, Moses was counseled by Jethro to provide rulers for the people, of such as were qualified for office, and the qualifications he proceeds to describe: "Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness."

This counsel was reasonable and wise, and was sanctioned by divine authority. As a part, therefore, of the express word of God, it is clearly embraced within the divine commission to the ministry, and should, like other precepts of revelation, have its place in the pulpit.

In Deuteronomy, xvi. 18, 19, 20, Moses rehearses a law of God in the following terms, viz.: "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment, thou shalt not respect persons; neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow; that thou mayest live and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Lest, however, it should be said that these directions are portions of antiquated and exploded Judaism, let attention be directed to the New Testament, for unquestionable examples of present authority.

The apostle Paul says, (Rom. xiii. 3, 4): "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

The character, qualifications, derived authority, and duties of rulers, are here embraced in one view; all going to show that God ruleth in the kingdoms of men, holding

rulers accountable as his subalterns, and giving them instructions in his holy Word.

The duties of the ruled are no less a subject of divine teaching. Rom. xiii. 1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." So in the 7th verse of the same chapter. "Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

Whatever may be the precise meaning of these teachings, one thing is certain; they pertain to politics. The Bible then treats of politics; and the pulpit, to be the echo of the Bible, to follow its guidance, and not shun to declare all the counsel of God, can not avoid the same field, nor be silent on the same topic.

It may be unnecessary, in the present connection, to express an opinion as to the extent of the injunction: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." The task in hand is not an exposition of scripture teaching, so much as the illustration of scripture practice. This task is to be performed by showing that the Bible treats of politics, and therefore that the pulpit must do so, or leave the track of the Bible. But the sentiment expressed, and the duty enjoined, in Romans xiii. 1-7, are of such practical importance as to warrant a few suggestions respecting their import.

The main question in the case is, what is meant by subjection to the higher powers? Admitting that the higher powers are those in actual possession of government, without regard to personal character, did the apostle mean to inculcate the sentiment, that active obedience is to be rendered to all their laws and requirements, however immoral and repugnant to the laws of God, or the demands of

right? Or did he mean to require active obedience only in civil matters and matters of moral indifference; and in respect to moral duties and the laws of God, when the edicts of human government are in conflict with them, to enjoin silent subjection or passive obedience? In other words, did he not mean to say to Christians, Do your duty to God and the cause of Christ, and silently submit to all penalties inflicted?

To suppose the former meaning, would involve consequences too contradictory and monstrous to be a part of divine revelation. It would sanction the enormities of all tyrants, and condemn the "goodly company of martyrs" and faithful witnesses to the truth. It would lay Christians under obligation to be actively engaged in deeds of wickedness.

Surely the apostle is not the advocate of despotism and oppression, as an ordinance of God. Would he sanction the decree of Nebuchadnezzar to worship the golden image, and condemn the three young men for not obeying it? Would he call the edict of Herod to destroy the infants of Bethlehem, an ordinance of God? Would he condemn Daniel, when he did not hesitate to disregard a law of the Medes and Persians; or the believing mother of Moses, when she was not afraid to disobey the king of Egypt?

If active obedience, in all cases in which the greatest crimes are committed in the name and under the forms of government, is a requirement of the Bible, is not the divine government a kingdom divided against itself? If God requires obedience to laws and authority which are subversive of his own revealed will, how can his government stand? Surely, if any hypothesis can be inadmissible, on account of its inherent absurdity and contradiction, it must be that which teaches that God commands and forbids the same action at one and the same time. The Jewish rulers commanded the apostles not to teach or to

preach in the name of Jesus. But by direct revelation they were enjoined to go up to the temple, and preach openly all the words of their divine message. Were both of these commands binding upon them at the same time?

The doctrine, then, of active obedience to unrighteous rule, is not the doctrine of Paul, or of the Holy Spirit. If the commands of God and those of earthly rulers are in conflict, and can not be reconciled, which has often been the case and may be again, no Christian can be in doubt which to obey, God or man.

On this point it may be proper to add, that when two or more parallel lines of duty are marked out by divine command, and have a reciprocal and equal force, the obligation to observe them depends on the continuance of their relative position. Thus, the command "Thou shalt not kill," has its correlative obligation resting on each individual member of society, that he do nothing which forfeits his life to public justice. But if he become violently aggressive against the life of his fellow citizen, the force of the prohibition, in respect to him, ceases, and another law comes into application to his case, viz., "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." "The murderer shall surely be put to death."

So the moral duties of rulers and the ruled are reciprocal and correlative. They are in force while their true relative position is maintained. Of rulers, it is required that they be just, ruling in the fear of God. Of the ruled, it is required that every soul be subject to the higher powers, i.e., actively so far as the laws of God allow, passively in all other respects. But if rulers depart from the ordinance of God, and abandon the ground on which he has placed their authority, can they justly claim the rights and honors of a position which they have forsaken? If they leave the divinely appointed basis of authority, do they not at the same time forfeit its prerogatives? If they abandon the ground on which God has given them

the right to rule, and made it the duty of others to obey, what does their power become, but mere usurpation.

Does the question arise, who is to judge when the crisis of forfeiture of authority occurs, or when human rule abandons its position, and comes in conflict with divine authority? The answer is, each of the parties concerned is to be its own judge, subject only to the decision of the Supreme Judge of all. This is so, because each of the parties has an alternative, a ground of option, in regard to its own course. The ruler has his alternative, to rule in the fear of God and according to justice, or incur the hazard of a contrary course, together with the judgments of the offended majesty of heaven and earth,—judgments both temporal and eternal. The ruled have the alternative to obey, or suffer the penalty of disobedience; in other words, to violate conscience, or submit to a temporal evil. In reference to this very case, Christ says: "Fear not them that kill the body, and have nothing more that they can do; but fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." Of his duty in such case, every one must judge for himself, in the sight of God. Such has been the practice of holy men in every age of the world. Daniel judged for himself, and acted according to his conscience in a case between existing rule and his God. So acted the holy army of martyrs. And so acted the apostle Paul, in resisting the authority of Nero, requiring him to deny Christ. By this, his own example, he explained his own understanding of the injunction he had before delivered respecting the higher powers. The community at large has an alternative of submitting to existing powers, or incurring the hazards and responsibilities, temporal and eternal, moral, civil, and social, of a revolution. While this is true, it must also be true, that the claims of rulers and the duty of the ruled

are defined and limited by the word of God, and that the Bible is no charter for persecutors or tyrants.*

Again. The Bible enjoins the duty of praying for rulers as a special duty, in and out of the pulpit, and thus certifies a specific relation of the pulpit to politics.

* Every subject of the powers that be has the alternative, either of obedience to every law or ordinance of man, that does not conflict with the higher law of him who is the one only Supreme Lawgiver, and who is able to save or to destroy, (James iv. 12,) or to meet his responsibilities at a human and at a divine tribunal, and submit to the penalty. This is true, when human and divine laws agree. In most cases, the agreement or disagreement will be obvious. In cases where reason for doubt is found, and time admits, the question should be prayerfully considered and conscientiously decided; but so as that the subject may never suffer as an evil doer.

Equally is it the duty of the powers that be to make no statute, ordinance or law, which can, in any way or form, conflict with the revealed will of the one Supreme Lawgiver. Never are they allowed to place their subjects in a position where wrong-doing or punishment is the only alternative.

But when the powers that be are in open and decided conflict with the will of God; when they require what God has forbidden, or forbid what he has required, their authority ceases to have a divine sanction; their rule is usurpation, and they have no claim to obedience.

The practical and immediate duty of the subject in such case, may vary with the form of government under which he lives. If the power be absolute and irresponsible, if there is no place for petition or remonstrance, his duty is expatriation or revolution. But under an elective government, every means of redress, such as petition, remonstrance, appeals to electors, and to the reformatory power of the ballot box should be exhausted before resort to extreme measures of self-defense.

In no case will Scripture, reason, or conscience justify a derived and subordinate power in assuming the prerogatives of its superior; in no case can such assumption or usurpation be justly acknowledged or obeyed. So have the people of God in every age understood the matter, and so have they acted; as has been already stated.

Paul writes to Timothy, as a public teacher and preacher of the gospel, that he might know how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, and of course in the pulpit. And while he charges him, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, to preach the word; he also exhorts, that "first of all, supplications and prayers, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty."

It is therefore a scriptural duty of the pulpit to pray for rulers and all in authority. This implies some recognition of their wants, their dangers, their responsibilities to God and to the people who have elevated them to the stations they occupy. Acceptable prayer, whether by an individual or a congregation, must be intelligent, and the expression of the sincere desires of those who offer it. And it can not be thus offered without reference, in thought, if not in word, to the characters and circumstances of the rulers themselves.

By this is not meant that the pulpit is called to become a censor of the actions or administration of those who are in authority. Much less should the solemn service of prayer be made a vehicle of political invective, or be occupied with animadversions on public affairs, under cover of the forms of devotion. But it is meant that the very injunction of prayer for rulers brings them and the pulpit into a friendly relation, makes the latter their support and auxiliary, gives them a place among the sacred themes of the Christian Sabbath and the house of God, and connects them in the most impressive manner with the highest sanctities of religion. It is only the government which is thus habitually enshrined in the prayers of its citizens, that can with any appropriateness be styled a Christian government.

The relation is made still more plain and particular, by the varied form of expression, in which the duty is inculcated. Not simply prayer and supplication are enjoined, but giving of thanks. This part of the direction can hardly be observed without some distinct recognition of measures and results. To give thanks for nothing, or for the success and prosperity of a weak or wicked government, would ill comport with the sincerity or dignity of the pulpit. And farther, the specified purpose, as well as burden of these prayers and supplications for rulers is, that all concerned may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty; which is as much as to say, that the prayers from the pulpit for all in authority should respect not only the official station of rulers, but their policy also; that it may be such as to promote peace and quietness in godliness and honesty. In every view, then, the relation of the pulpit to politics is clear and undeniable.

If to the above considerations, we add some reasons *why* rulers should be remembered in the prayers of the pulpit, the conclusion will be greatly strengthened. Among these reasons, the following are worthy of notice:

Divine wisdom and guidance are always requisite to ensure wise legislation and the faithful execution of laws. Rulers are dependent, as well as other men. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will," Prov. xxi., 1. With the best intentions, rulers are liable to err in judgment, and to fail in execution.

Civil and social freedom and prosperity in a community, depend on the prevalence and maintenance of moral principle. And the influence, as well as the existence of moral principle, depends on the example and countenance of those in authority; on the laws they enact, and the manner in which the laws are executed. Rulers stand conspicuously before the people; their influence and example are in

a commanding position, and in close contact with all classes of the population.

Rulers are exposed to many and various temptations. The eye of ambition is attracted by the allurements of honor and elevation; the ear of vanity is charmed by the voice of popular applause; the heart of cupidity is touched and excited by the prospect of emolument; and every way, the natural propensities of the public man are liable to be inflamed by the circumstances of his position. And those are not wanting who have an interest in giving these temptations their full effect. In this state of exposure, rulers need, in an eminent degree, the restraining, preventing power of God's Word and Spirit. And God will be inquired of, and sought unto, for what his people need.

Rulers hold the great essential interests of the nation in their hands. With them resides the power of war or peace. What countless multitudes of lives have been sacrificed by the mere caprice of rulers! What desolation and misery have overspread the fairest portions of the earth, to gratify the ungoverned passions of men placed in authority! How are virtue, and industry, and every comfort blighted by misrule!

Rulers make, expound, and execute the laws, on which depend the liberty, property, and life of every person. They guard the sanctions of the oath, that great bond of society.

In popular forms of government, the purity of the elective franchise depends on the influence of rulers. If they are patriotic, and above the reach of those motives which actuate the mere demagogue, they will frown on every attempt to gain office by fraud. But if they are unscrupulous as to means, and insatiable as to honor or gain, their influence will be extensively felt in all the avenues of power, and seen in the removal of the guards and defenses of freedom.

Liberty of speech and of conscience are also, in a great

measure, in the hands of rulers. Grant that the people have the constitutional right to petition, to remonstrate, and of course to examine the measures of their public servants; grant that rulers are bound by their oath of office to protect this right; yet, if disposed, with what ease can they make constructive treason of whatever is said or written adverse to their views!

Finally, government is the channel of national sins. It is the exponent, the corporate agent of the nation or state. Through the government, and that only, the nation acts. Therefore, a sin, to be national, must have the sanction, express or implied, of the rulers. It can not, generally, become national without the concurrence of the rulers. National sins are visited by national judgments in the present world, because nations, as such, will have no existence in a future state. All the retribution, then, which follows national sins, involving the most fearful temporal calamities, is the effect of misrule, and comes on a people through the misconduct of their rulers. "When the wicked bear rule, the people mourn." And one of the greatest of temporal judgments upon a land, and a means by which God punishes a corrupt community, is the administration of wicked rulers.

Such are some of the reasons why we should pray for rulers. If the pulpit, then, is not in direct relation to politics in all its aspects, if it be not directly concerned with all the departments of state affairs, it does, through this duty of praying for rulers, indirectly reach every one of them. By express divine injunction, government in all its functions has been brought under the cognizance of the pulpit, in the duty of praying, and teaching the people to pray for all in authority, that they may rule in the fear of God, so that the people may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.

But why multiply arguments to show the relation of the pulpit to politics, when all civilized and Christian

nations admit such relation, and make it a ground of practice? They do this in the observance, by governmental appointment, of days of fasting and thanksgiving, and by the appointment of chaplains for their halls of legislation and jurisprudence, and for their navies and armies. If the pulpit has no relation to politics, if the Bible has no mission in regard to the secular affairs of a people, why summon the living oracle of the pulpit, the expounder of the word of God, the deputed intercessor at the altar of prayer, to intrude upon the precincts of political life? What has the minister of the gospel to do in such places, if his office and his work are for ever divorced from political interests?

The call of legislators, judges, and commanders for ministers of the gospel to officiate, in immediate connection with political transactions, is an implied admission on their part, both of their dependence on the God of Providence, and their desire to be guided by his truth, to be recipients of his favor; and of the perfect consistency and propriety of ministers of the gospel becoming their mouth in speaking to God, and the mouth of God in speaking his word to them. It is a recognition of the pulpit as an appointed instrumentality for the conservation of the various political interests of the nation. The propriety of these proceedings, who but an infidel or a heathen will deny?

Moreover, the service of the pulpit, on such occasions, is not confined to prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving. It is expected to go farther, and instruct the people from the word of God respecting their appropriate duties as good citizens and good rulers, and to administer such reproof and admonition as existing delinquencies require. The field of these instructions is circumscribed by no prohibitions within the limits of divine revelation and sound morals. It is a wide field, including all the great

interests of the nation. Here the pulpit may expatiate without aggression, or just cause of offense to any.

Here, then, the pulpit stands in very intimate relation to politics, not only by the admission, but by the invitation and sanction of the civil powers. This fact, by itself, would be sufficient to substantiate the relation as real and just. But when we find this common consent given to an interpretation of Scripture, which appears to be correct on its face, the conclusion is confirmed by coincidence and general agreement, beyond all doubt or question. At all events, political recusants are put to silence by the common law of their own system. They are not the men to complain of the intrusions of the pulpit into their field, when, in their sober moments, and under a due sense of their heavy burdens, they are glad to invite the pulpit to help them on in the prosecution of their work.*

* In the history of our Republic, there never was a more critical period than that in which, in May, 1787, the delegates of the several States were assembled in Philadelphia to form the Constitution for the Union. A rupture at one time seemed inevitable. At that juncture, Dr. Franklin proposed a recess of three days, to allay the excited feelings of the assembly; and then concluded his speech with these words "Before I sit down, I will suggest another matter; and I am really surprised that it has not been proposed by some other member at an earlier period of our deliberations. I will suggest, Mr. President, the propriety of nominating and appointing, before we separate, a chaplain to this convention, whose duty it shall be uniformly to assemble with us, and introduce the business of each day by an address to the Creator of the universe, and the Governor of all nations, beseeching him to preside in our councils, enlighten our minds with a portion of heavenly wisdom, influence our hearts with a love of truth and justice, and crown our labors with complete and abundant success."

An eye-witness of the same, remarks: "The doctor sat down; and never did I behold a countenance at once so dignified and delighted as was that of Washington at the close of this address." But one voice in that august assembly was raised against this proposition to unite the pulpit with politics.

The pulpit, then, is found in legitimate and scriptural relation to politics. They are coördinate occupants of the same field, joint-proprietors of the same territory, fellow-laborers in the same work. Each has, indeed, its distinct department, each its own proper office and function,—but both coöperating to the same end, both tending to the same result. As, in the human frame, one member can not say to another, “I have no need of you,” neither is there occasion for one member to clash with another; so, in the organization of society, the magistrate or citizen can not say to the pulpit, “I have no need of you,” nor the pulpit say to the ruler or citizen, “I have no need of you;” but each, in its own proper sphere, works harmoniously with each, in promoting the public good. Church and state must not be blended in one to the corruption of both; neither may they interfere with each other; but each, preserving its own identity, contribute its own appropriate aid in promoting and securing the safety, peace, and prosperity of the whole.

3. There is now a third view of politics, which does not relate so much to details of administration, or to those ethical and moral questions which are vital to a nation’s prosperity, as to those arts and measures by which unscrupulous men seek to acquire or retain place and power. It is politics, as the word is understood by demagogues.

Politics, in this view, often includes immoralities in principle and practice, unjust and arbitrary measures, and even acts of impiety and persecution, alike subversive of duty to God, and the welfare of a nation. And it is asserting no more than the truth warrants, to say that practical politics, in our country at this day, is more or less of this stamp. It is seldom, if ever, that the desecration of great moral principles is seen aside from the path of political movements. Political aspirants and party leaders are wont to make large inroads into the

province of morals, and to carry with them trains of followers and retainers. It is by no means uncommon that moral issues of vital character, the dearest interests of freedom, are involved in a political campaign; by no means rare, that these issues are the pivot on which the whole question moves, the weight that turns the scale. The observance of the Sabbath, the suppression of intemperance, profaneness, or gambling, are not seldom the questions from which political capital is extracted, by opposition to morals, and appeals to the worst passions of a fallen race. Every popular election gives testimony, more or less abundant, to the potency of these appeals.

To appreciate duly the amount of corrupt material wrought into the fabric of practical politics, it will be necessary to take a broader view of this field, and examine the actuating forces in some of the great political movements and revolutions of past times.

What was politics, in the history of the British Isles, during the domination of the houses of Tudor and Stuart? What was politics in the reign of bloody Mary? On what principles were questions of prerogative, allegiance, and treason then decided? Were not political questions then constructed from subjects moral and religious, in the purest sense? What was politics when the first James uttered his famous maxim — “No bishop, no king?” What was politics when, under his successors, not only civil freedom, but the rights of conscience and the first principles of morality and religion were all but annihilated; when Claverhouse and Jeffrey, like two infernal spirits, rioted in public misery, and the hills and valleys of England and Scotland were stained with streams of innocent blood? What was politics when the Puritans were driven by oppression, first into decided testimony to their principles, and then, for that testimony, into exile?

What was politics in France during the reign of terror,

when the Bible and Sabbath were denounced, when licentiousness and atheism were installed as national deities?

What was politics when the fathers of the American Republic declared for freedom and independence? Was it with them a mere question of taxation without representation? Did they not discover, in the folds of the contest, the question of the rights of conscience? Were the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock and the veterans and patriots of 1776 to rise before this generation and testify, would they not assure us that their politics and the politics of their day involved, not mere municipal or commercial questions, not mere problems of finance, but great moral principles and rights? Would they not say that they resisted aggression on one point, because submission would invite aggression on other points, and because they saw a principle involved in *that one question* which lay at the foundation of all their moral and religious well-being, as well as of their civil and social freedom? Did they not feel that all for which they had braved the perils of the ocean and the wilderness was at stake?

What is the politics of the present day, and of this land? Are they merely questions of party ascendancy; merely points of speculation and opinion, or expediency? Are they nothing more than the adjustment of pecuniary interests, or assignment of offices and emolument? Are no great moral principles involved, no great questions agitated and at issue, which deeply affect the moral state of the whole nation, which will extend their influence, for good or evil, for weal or woe, to unborn generations?

To enumerate all the obliquities of practical politics, would be a hopeless task; but justice to the truth requires that some of the evils which beset their path, should be kept in view; that the way may be prepared to judge of the relation which the pulpit has to politics of this character.

Political movements are liable to abound in falsehood and slander.

When moral obligation is disregarded and conscience silenced, as they are in these movements, it is natural to call to aid all available means, and to make most use of those which are most easily obtained, and most effectual. Among these means, misrepresentation and detraction are foremost, and they serve their purpose before they can possibly be detected and refuted. In common cases, the temptation to falsehood is greatly weakened by its doubtful success, and the anticipated reaction which truth must finally produce. But political falsehood is peculiarly adapted to be successful. No matter how certainly truth may triumph in the end; in the meantime, the election passes by, the falsehood has done its work, and the politician cares for nothing more. This is a point where the political press is greatly in fault. And the facilities for this practice increase the temptation to its recurrence. By this means, a strong tide of moral corruption flows over society, and misrepresentation of facts and character becomes a current, and almost necessary resort of politicians. But, as before said, political falsehood is as corrupting as falsehood of any other form; while its popularity and prevalence serve to shake the pillars of truth and confidence in the community.

Politics enlists, also, or draws in its train, other practices which tend to public demoralization. It becomes associated with Sabbath breaking, gambling, profaneness, intemperance, and general licentiousness, for the purpose of gaining suffrages from those addicted to these vices, and the popularity and power which are coveted. It tampers with oaths of office, in the administration of justice, and thus weakens or dissolves one of the great bonds of free society. The sacredness of the oath and its binding force, are essential to the very existence of such society. In a republican government, it is the safe-

guard of legislative, judicial, and executive integrity. When, therefore, the moral power of the oath gives way before the blinding, hardening influence of selfish, corrupt politics, not only is the republic brought into peril, but a moral evil, of fearful magnitude, is inflicted upon it; the floodgates of perjury are opened; and who can calculate the result!

Nearly allied to the crime of perjury, is the fraud of false voting, or false returns of votes. Frauds at the ballot box are, in a moral view, an aggravated form of crime, and peculiarly injurious in their consequences. And it is difficult to say in which direction they are most hurtful and alarming; whether to the liberty, or the morals of a community. In some of our States, the rights of citizenship can be reached only through certain qualifications, and the exercise of those rights is preceded by the elector's oath. Now, if the qualifications are not possessed, the applicant is not an elector in view of law. Consequently, the oath he takes is a false oath, and known to be such; he is morally guilty of perjury.

Moreover, the rights and benefits of suffrage belong to legal voters, and to them only. These privileges are property as much as any other possession. Every legal voter in the community has in possession, and ought to have in enjoyment, a certain share or proportion of a joint stock, made up of the shares of all the legal voters in that community. He is entitled to a certain proportion or share of influence in making laws, and executing them; in laying and collecting taxes, and applying them; in deciding questions of public interest and political economy. This share or proportion of influence is his property, subject exclusively to his control and use. If, then, illegal voters come in to occupy a share of this privilege, they take it from the rightful owners; or, what is the same in effect, they depreciate, by what they take, the value of what remains. This may be carried so far as to destroy

wholly the value of the privilege to the rightful owner. What, then, is every act of illegal voting, whether by violence or fraud, but an act of robbery?

To have a correct view of this matter, suppose a joint stock company formed, for the prosecution of some branch of business. Those who become legal members, and invest property in the concern, have an exclusive claim to the management. Every real stockholder has a right to a proportionate share of influence in regulating the concern and disposing of its avails. This is his right, his property. Suppose that persons, without property in the company, intrude, and by violence or false pretences assume the rights of real owners. Do they not take and use the property of others without their consent? And may they not become so numerous as to alienate and pervert the property altogether? What are such usurpers but transgressors of the eighth command of the decalogue? The illegal voter does the same thing. The privileges of the franchise are the property of the legal voter, and the most valuable of all his property, because that on which every other possession depends. To take from him his just share of these privileges is to rob him, in that particular, not only, but in all that depends upon it, it may be of life itself. The amount of this plunder is far greater than at first appears. In a community of four hundred legal voters, if one hundred illegal votes be intruded, the value of each freeman's franchise is depreciated twenty-five per cent. This is a loss that would be felt and heard from, in regard to any other species of property. And yet the farmer can better afford to be plundered of one-fourth of his crops, the merchant of one-fourth of his stock in trade, the mechanic and manufacturer of one-fourth of their products, the professional man of one-fourth of his income, than the freeman of one-fourth of his franchise; because the latter gives value to all other property. It is marvel-

ous that freemen should quietly submit to be plundered of the most precious of all their earthly possessions.

Illegal voting is in principle no better than highway robbery. Nor is the moral state of those that employ it, or purposely profit by it, in any respect better.

It is a maxim venerable for age and truth, that the partaker is as really guilty as the perpetrator. The accomplice is liable to indictment and punishment, as well as the actor. If the illegal voter is a robber, he who uses such an instrument, and enjoys emolument or honor obtained by it, is so likewise.

In countries where the sovereignty resides in the legal voters, it can be possessed only by derivation from them. It may, for the time being, pass over to their legal representatives. But it can pass only from its original possessors, and only in legal form. Those that have no sovereignty can give none. An illegal voter, then, can give no right to office, and convey no authority. No one, nominally in office by virtue of illegal votes, can have a moral or legal right to exercise its powers. He is not the representative of sovereignty at all. All his official acts are usurpations. He has no prerogatives beyond those of a private citizen. If he presume to officiate on such ground, he does it on his moral responsibility. So far as he is cognizant of the fact, or has reason to believe it a fact, he is an accomplice in robbery. If human scrutiny is not adequate to the detection or prevention of the evil, there is a tribunal which is competent to discern and avenge all such aggression on the rights of men. This is what every office-holder and office-seeker, as well as every illegal voter, should ponder. He should count the cost of such a work of injustice and depredation. He is invading his neighbor's rights, — living by plunder; and is, in truth, a robber, so far as he gives or receives the avails of illegal votes.

It is also true that politics has to do with the question of human slavery.

Among the despotisms of the earth, slavery enters consistently into politics, because the basis of despotism is that, by divine right, one individual as supreme, and a few others, as a privileged order, are entitled to the services of all the rest of a community; in other words, the masses of men were made to be menials to a higher order, possessing power and skill to manage and command. But in a government organized on the principle that "all men are endowed by their Maker with certain inalienable rights, such as liberty and the pursuit of happiness," slavery is a political heresy; and can, by no possibility, become an article of a political creed but by usurpation, nor without inflicting a deep, if not a fatal, wound on the vital principle of government. If, however, slavery is forced into such a creed, it brings all its inherent qualities and responsibilities with it. So that it still remains an open question for the investigation of the moral and religious teacher.

In this third view of politics, the duty of the pulpit to expound and apply the word, and to declare all the counsel of God, remains the same as before stated. If the Bible teaches morality, it of course rebukes immorality; and to do the same, is therefore the legitimate province of the pulpit. Its obligations, indeed, are rather increased, because crime, incorporated into public policy, is rendered much more influential and dangerous. Immorality confined to individuals, or to private and sequestered localities, is a small affair compared with immorality flooding the community, and invested with the honor and patronage of public station.

Does a political connection change the nature or lessen the evils of immorality? If not, why should it be pretended that the relation of the pulpit to it is changed? The change of name or of use does not change the thing

or its relations. Call intemperance politics. What of that? Is it not intemperance still, and all the worse and more alarming for its new alliance? Call profaneness slander, or slavery politics. What then? Are they any better for the name?

But it will be said that political issues are made to depend upon these practices; so that, if their nature is not changed, their circumstances are; and they can not be approached without intrusion into things that belong not to the pulpit.

As to the change of circumstances, it is not for the better but for the worse, and makes the duty of the pulpit all the more urgent. As to the intrusion of the pulpit into the province of politics by the rebuke of vice, it is an inverted statement. The intrusion is all the other way. The truth is, by espousing the cause of immorality, politicians have intruded into the province of the pulpit, and put themselves in direct conflict with its duty. Now, the question is, shall the pulpit give way to the intrusion, and abandon its work; or shall it still maintain its ground? In other words, shall it recede from the post assigned by God, at man's bidding?

The truth on the point just now under consideration, needs to be duly considered and settled, that the merits of any conflict between politics and the pulpit, respecting immoral practices, may be justly estimated, and the censure bestowed where it belongs; and that the pulpit may not, through timidity or false modesty, be frightened from its path of duty. Who will say that immorality is an evil which the pulpit is not most solemnly bound to expose and denounce? If, then, politicians undertake the defense and patronage of crime, who is the aggressor, who is the intruder, at whose door lies the fault? Shall politics run under the wheels of moral obligation, and complain of aggression, or seek for sympathy because of wounds received? Shall politics be placed as a shield before im-

morality, and then complain of annoyance from the darts of truth ? Shall it be subjected to a demoniacal possession, and then cry out against him who rebukes it in God's name, like the man who dwelt among the tombs, "What have we to do with thee ? Art thou come to torment us before the time ?"

Suppose a field intrusted to the care of two keepers. One of them is charged with the fences and general security. The other is charged with the cultivation and the sowing of good seed, and both are accountable to the owner of the field. It is manifest that, while each attends to his own part of the work, and is faithful, the peace and prosperity of the field, so far as means can go, are safe.

But the man of fences and defences becomes aspiring ; he wishes to get possession of the field. The man of cultivation and seed stands in his way. He must be overawed or put down. The former begins to sow tares. The latter remonstrates, and resists. The former complains of aggression and intrusion, and appeals for sympathy in his behalf. The seedsman avers it to be his duty to prevent such sowing by all lawful means. The fenceman avers that the tares are a part of his domain, and that he is bound, at all events, to defend them ; not as tares, but as his property. Now which of these is the intruder and aggressor ? And more : would the seedsman have been more faithful and dutiful to his employer if he had joined with the other and divided the spoil ; or if he had prudently declined all contest, and put himself right in his own eyes, by a timely conservatism, a care for his own safety, and an entire neglect of the interests of the owner of the field ?

The right and duty of the pulpit to speak of sin in political connections, are the same as to speak of sin elsewhere. It can not be called in question for so doing, save only as it may abuse that right. The abuse may be restrained, not the right. If a man abuses his personal

liberty, he is liable for it; but farther than this, he is not to be restrained. If, in particular instances, the pulpit oversteps its limits, using its liberty as a cloak of maliciousness in that particular case, the abuse is a matter to be called into account, and proper satisfaction and security may be demanded. But the correction of abuse, and the restraint or alienation of rights, are two very different things.

The rights and duties of the pulpit are not derived from man, nor are they dependent on human authority. Therefore, so long as it keeps within the lawful bounds of discussion, exposition, or instruction, it is amenable to no human authority as to the topics of which it shall treat.

Is it claimed that any discussion of a subject in the pulpit, connected with politics, is an abuse of its rights? Then let the charge be sustained from the nature of the subject, or the word of God. The abuse must not be nominal or constructive; not determined by partisan zeal or prejudice; but by some common and acknowledged standard. If party dictation is made the standard of use or abuse, if the personal pleasure of politicians becomes the criterion of patriotism or treason, then is this institution of divine appointment subjected to gross injustice and tyranny.

The union of church and state is, on all hands, justly deprecated. But this principle, if rightly interpreted and justly applied, forbids the encroachment of the state upon the church, as much as the encroachment of the church upon the state. Grant that the pulpit has, and ought to have, no authoritative control over the politics of the community, and can properly approach it only by moral instructions. So, on the other hand, the state, or its authorities, can have no control over the instructions of the pulpit, and can approach it only with moral influence.

For the same reason that the state should steadfastly resist all attempts of the pulpit to intrude into any of its

political functions, by assumption of power and authority not its own, should the pulpit as strenuously resist all attempts of the state or of politicians to intrude into its special rights, by interdictions or restraints, in respect to the topics of its instruction. The pulpit has its rights and place, and its just claim to protection, in the exercise and enjoyment of its rights, as well as the state, or as individuals. And it may be added with obvious truth, that while the pulpit is employed in its own moral field, the political adventurers who invade that field in quest of political capital, and therein suffer rebuke, have no ground of complaint.

But there is another view to be taken of the position of the pulpit, in the great area of public and political morals, and that is the view of its responsibility to God.

We have seen that the pulpit, as an appointed means of communicating the word of God, has a right to deliver its message, without hindrance or molestation. We have now to see that, with this right, the pulpit has also the duty, and is charged most solemnly with the duty, and is held responsible to God for the faithful discharge of the duty, of declaring the warnings and rebukes, as well as the promises of God. The pulpit is required to do this at the hazard of everything valuable on earth, even of life itself.

In the domain of moral government, responsibility is spread out over all its subjects. Individual responsibility, official responsibility, circumstantial responsibility, attend all conditions and actions of men. No exemption can be found. And while it is made the duty of the pulpit to publish and illustrate responsibility in respect to all classes of citizens, it is itself, so far from being exonerated, loaded with an accumulation of responsibility of fearful weight. Its charge covers the whole moral field where it is placed. In an important sense, even, its field is the world. So far as the presentation, explanation, defense,

and application of moral truth are essential to the present or future good of man, so far the pulpit is answerable for facts and consequences. The divine command is this, viz.: "Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." No exception is here made in favor of wicked politicians, wicked rulers, or wicked parties. They all come within the circle of moral obligation, and must therefore be equally the objects of warning and admonition. The penalty of neglect is to incur a large share in the guilt and misery of their ruin.

The pulpit, then, has a divinely appointed and constituted relation to politics; especially to corrupt and immoral politics. This relation can not be evaded. The responsibilities of it must be met by faithful performance, on pain of swift and signal condemnation. The pulpit not only may, it *must* preach politics. So far as politics are blended with immoral principle or practice, as it generally is more or less, so far the moral law and the gospel condemn it, and woe to the pulpit that withholds the warning, whatever political web is marred, whatever political path is crossed, or whatever political schemes are exposed and defeated.

Such are the ordinary duties and responsibilities of the pulpit.

But special occasions may arise, when moral obligation in the common transactions of life is openly violated; when reckless speculation and commercial frauds are rife; when honest industry and frugality give place to daring adventure and extravagance; when the hasty acquisition of wealth, by any means, is the controlling purpose of business; when ruinous panics are sprung upon the public by deceivers; when public confidence is shaken and

scattered; and when financial gambling takes the place of fair exchange. Occasions may arise when the spirit of fraud and violence may pervade political as well as commercial operations; when the sanctity of the ballot box may be violated; when false returns of electoral votes may be made, to subserve the purposes of demagogues; when the ignorant are imposed upon by false reports; when measures of oppression and usurpation are executed under forms of law; and when political intrigue and sycophancy play their part, to the shame of liberty, and no less to the shame of common decency and common sense. Such occasions, whatever may be their political bearing, indicate a condition of stupendous moral corruption. Politics is steeped in wickedness. Those that do such things fear not God nor regard man. Amidst such raging elements of depravity, the pillars of the social fabric must shake, if they be not utterly demolished; while every hope of immortality is shrouded in gloom.

When such occasions arise, it concerns the pulpit to inquire most seriously, how far they are justly to be charged to its own neglect? How far, through apathy or fear, has it failed to prevent or mitigate the evil? It can not be silent or neutral in such emergencies.

And then, again, it concerns the pulpit, in the midst of these political tornadoes, to rouse itself to vigorous action; to stem the torrent of vice flowing in upon the sacred retreats of social and Christian life; to rebuke, openly and sharply, the aggressors and offenders; to succor the tempted; to sustain the falling; to comfort the afflicted; and to gather the broken, scattered fragments of the general wreck, and reinstate them in order, peace and security. Let no treacherous plea of moderation, conservatism, or charity, cast dust in the eyes of the watchman, or paralyze his arm. Moderation, conservatism and charity, are precious virtues in their place. At the same time, they are not incompatible with truthfulness and de-

cision. Must moderation always be shaking with chills ; must conservatism have the palsy : must charity be blind, deaf and dumb ?

Besides, the names of excellent virtues are words, not things. And as words, they may be misapplied. Is it not possible, and sometimes convenient, to gloss over the most shameful neglect of duty with these charming names ? A conservatism that just keeps self out of harm's way, is not the moral quality needed in the pulpit, especially in times of trial. Why have a pulpit, if it must never announce any thing but what people like to hear ? Why have a watchman, if he must never be allowed to say any thing but, "All is well ?" Each man might as well say this for himself, and on his bed.

When, therefore, a moral crisis arrives in connection with politics, the pulpit has occasion for a work of serious review and reflection. Events seem to say, it has not been faithful to its trust, it has not dealt truly with its message from God, else things would never have come to such a pass. Had the pulpit been vigilant and emphatic in its work, would all the moral bonds in the community be thus loosened, all the barriers broken down ; would the moral sensibility of all classes be thus obtuse and inert ?

And then the pulpit has a future in prospect. What is that future to be, and how modified by existing influences ? This is a great question, on the practical solution of which the moral welfare of society and the destiny of future generations depend. Is the pulpit to be bound in chains, and led a captive in the triumphal march of some political chief, or doomed to do menial service in the kitchen of some successful demagogue ? Or is it to be used as a political decoy, to draw the whole flock into the meshes of the fowler ?

It is time that this whole subject of the powers, functions, and duties of the pulpit were considered anew ;—time that its office, as originally projected in the counsels

of heaven, should be explained and vindicated ; time that it were known by every one whom it concerns, whether the pulpit be a human device, based on human opinion and authority, subject to human caprice and popular impulses, set up for the sole purpose of giving an audible echo to the popular voice, erected as a rostrum to exercise the vocal organs, where men may clerically beat the air and talk to vacuity about nothing, or, whether it be an instrument appointed to communicate the word of God to men, to all men, in all conditions and stations of life ?

If there is no need of this, why is there so much opposition, and so much hesitation as to the efficient discharge of its duties ? Why is it that the faintest allusion to existing and rampant immoralities is met with the charge, as if an offense, of preaching politics ? Why is it that, in the midst of abounding moral corruption, no voice of rebuke is heard from many pulpits ; and from others only the feeble remonstrance of Eli to his wicked sons ? Why is it that any pulpits should, in such circumstances, thank God that they are conservative ; that is, neither for the truth and Christ nor against them ; thank God that they are no fanatics ; that they make no disturbance or divisions ; that they countenance no agitation ; that they cry Peace, peace ! when God has said there is no peace ? Why is it that one branch of pulpit duty is placed in invidious contrast with another, the exposition of the way of salvation set over against the rebuke of open sin ; as though the gospel could be preached without inculcating repentance and reformation ; or men could be saved in the service of their lusts and vanities ? Why is it that the pulpit has lost so much of its ancient dignity ; and is, to a great extent, regarded as a mere tool of conventional morals, manners, and doctrines, a toy of fashion and caprice ?

The foregoing considerations are of special importance

to a community under a republican form of government. The peculiar structure of such a government brings the pulpit into immediate and effective communication with the fountain of sovereignty. Under other governments, the higher powers are fenced off with forms and etiquette, and are rarely accessible to moral instruction or pious example. Despotic and hereditary rulers stand on an elevation which few can approach; and still fewer with the voice of admonition and warning. But in a republic the sovereignty resides with the people. They are the higher power; and all authority is delegated, and sent forth from a level where all classes meet in equality. Here the pulpit is in direct and familiar intercourse with the sovereignty. It meets the sovereignty every Sabbath day. By its teachings, and by every appropriate influence, it forms, molds, and, to a great extent, educates it. In the family, in the school, and in all the paths of familiar intercourse, the pulpit applies to it its plastic hand. In feeding the sheep and lambs of Christ, and in watching for souls to win them to him, the pulpit simultaneously trains up citizens and prepares them for political duties. The pulpit, then, thus situated, without any assumption of power foreign to its sphere, without any encroachment on the affairs of state, must, of necessity, exert a vast influence on the public and political character of a community. At least, it has a favorable opportunity for so doing. If this influence be not put forth in all its strength, and in the right direction, the pulpit must be wanting to itself, and to the interests entrusted to its guardianship.

In further illustration of this subject, let us consider the consequences of excluding the pulpit from this field.

In the first place, it tends to the utter annihilation of the pulpit itself.

The practised and unscrupulous politician raises such issues and employs such measures and agents as promise most for the success of his schemes. Every truth and

principle of religion is made but a foot-ball for his convenience. He may, with the French Directory, choose atheism as an article of his political creed. He may deny Divine Revelation, and cast the anchor of his hope in the turbid waters of infidelity. He may find convenient a denial of Christ's divinity; or he may hope to make political capital by inveighing against the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, such as the sovereignty of grace, justification by faith alone, or the new birth. He may think his cause will gain patronage by associating with it immoral and licentious practices; such as Sabbath desecration, the liquor traffic, polygamy, slavery, or even idolatry. A political issue may be made to involve the abrogation of Christian worship, the shutting up of the house of prayer, or the banishment of every professed disciple of Christ; the extinction, so far as human power can effect it, of the Christian church and the Christian name. In short, there is nothing belonging to morals and religion that may not be implicated and put at issue in a political campaign.

If, then, the pulpit is to be excluded from any one point, because the politician has adopted it, where shall this exclusion stop? A single concession in the case puts the pulpit entirely at the mercy of the politician. He has only to extend his enclosure, taking one point after another into the prohibited district, to keep the pulpit on the retreat, until the whole list of topics for the pulpit is under veto. And thus the pulpit is left with nothing to do but to study politics instead of the Bible? The gospel of one time and place, must not be that of another. In truth, the pulpit publishes no gospel at all, and should better not make the pretense of doing it. Instead of the title of *pulpit*, or a station whence the Word of God is announced, it should rather be called the station of time-servers,—a tower of political weather-cocks.

In the complex organization of human society, there are many heterogeneous and discordant elements. Skep-

tics, libertines, formalists, and fanatics abound; each have their own personal and party interests to subserve; and all these become potent political elements. Of course, no one of these is willing to have his prospects injured, by the exposure of the moral blemishes of his system, and therefore wishes to keep them hid. The pulpit discusses the being of God, or the inspiration of the Scriptures. The infidels object, on the ground that their politics are assailed, and their hold on the public mind weakened. They demand that the pulpit shall confine itself to the gospel, and leave alone speculation and metaphysics, and above all, politics. The pulpit next proclaims that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; or what is the same thing, that drunkards, profane swearers, liars, gamblers, and unclean persons, can not enter heaven. The libertines of the audience are offended, and it is all because the pulpit preaches politics! They have calculated on much aid from those who love their lusts, and such preaching darkens their prospects. They insist that the pulpit shall preach the *gospel*, shall tell men what they shall do to be saved, and not be meddling with private affairs, and above all, not be meddling with *politics*. The pulpit inculcates justice and equity among men; it teaches that to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly, is the sum of true religion. Or, in another view of the same truth, it proclaims from the word of God that to remove the heavy burdens, to break every yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, is what God requires, and what he especially delights in. At once another class are offended. They can not endure such preaching. Their craft is in peril, the pulpit must bow to their dictation, or be required to depart out of their coasts. Their gospel is, the submission of servants and the unlimited rule of masters. They demand that the pulpit confine itself to this gospel, and abstain from such politics as justice and judgment; or the golden rule, to love others as ourselves, — to do to them as

we wish them to do to us. The pharisee, the antinomian, and all who venerate forms, days, saints, and canons, insist that the pulpit shall confine itself to their gospel, and not meddle with such politics as the thoughts and motives of the inner man. Heretics and apostates can not endure doctrine or creed. They abjure metaphysics, speculation, and abstraction; the substratum of all character, in their view, consists in facts and acts. To expose the moral defects of their system is to encroach on their rights, is to prejudice their cause, is to disparage their gospel, is to impugn their politics. Therefore, they cry out to the pulpit, "*Preach the gospel and abstain from politics!*"

Now in such case, what is the pulpit to do? The command of divine authority is, "Preach the word!" "But hold," says one, "you must not cross my path, weaken my influence, and hold my practice up to public odium; for in so doing you trench on my politics." "Hold," says another, and another, and "Hold," say they all; "preach our gospel or preach nothing." If the pulpit is to be governed by these demands, where is its work, and what has it left? It can not find a text in the Bible but will carry reproof to some one, and therefore not a text that will carry it clear of politics. If the pulpit concede to one, it must to another; if it yield one point, it must yield the whole. The trumpet of the pulpit must give an uncertain sound, its breath must evaporate in unmeaning generalities, it must be wrapt in silence, or it must utter the Word of the Spirit without partiality.

Let it not be said that this sketch is mere caricature or exaggeration. Every particular mentioned has been again and again involved in political contests, which have drenched the earth with blood. The pulpit has often had these foes in political garb, and has encountered them successfully only by taking to itself the whole armor of God, and standing fast in the truth. In this case, he that seeketh to save his life by undue concession, will lose it; while

he that apparently loseth his life by faithful testimony, will save it.

If the pulpit is to be excluded from the field of politics, what is to operate as a restraint and corrective for political sins and corruptions?

That these iniquities are numerous and flagrant, will be denied by none. Among them, fraud, slander, misrepresentation, imposition, covetousness, insatiable ambition, and treachery, stand conspicuous. Who does not know that political contests are a vast drama of perjury, fraud and falsehood? Every wrong of this class has a responsible author, and his sin will find him out. Political sins, as before remarked, have no special license, but possess all the turpitude of their class in common life. If there be any perceptible difference, political sins are the most heinous. If crimes are aggravated by the malignity which they indicate, by the evils which they meditate, and the extent of injury which they inflict, it must be admitted that political sins are among the most flagitious. They have a distinct malicious aim; they are not a bow drawn at a venture, but an arrow deliberately sped to an object. The victim is in the eye, and the barb is dipped in poison. The offender can not plead in extenuation, inadvertency, or thoughtlessness. The evil done is done of design, and shows *malice prepense*. And the extent and duration of the evil are greatly enhanced by its political connection. Individuals may be robbed of their good name, which is better than precious ointment, more valuable to them than mines of gold; they may be loaded with unmerited odium, their feelings lacerated with calumny or derision; and thus acts of most flagrant personal wrong may be perpetrated. But this is only a part of the wrong. The victim is a public man, holding public office, or a candidate for it. The interests of the whole community are in a sense bound up with his reputation, and his hold on public confidence. His ability to be useful, his influence for good,

depend chiefly on his standing in the public view. To destroy his reputation unjustly, is to injure the whole community, to take from every man, woman and child, the good he might do them. It is public as well as private robbery. And it renders public service so disgusting that persons of sensibility will generally shun it, and few, except the reckless and profligate, will submit to the sacrifice. Political sins, therefore, are especially aggravated, because most purely malicious and most extensively injurious. To pass them by, because connected with politics, is to trifle with moral obligation and accountability. It is to adopt a rule of political action, that countenances and sanctions the greatest crimes. And if these things may be allowed in political action, how long can they be confined to that action? Will they not spread abroad over the face of society, and corrupt alike character and conduct in all relations?

If the pulpit, then, is to be excluded from this field of politics,—if it may not rebuke slander, fraud, perjury, and falsehood, because they are interwoven in the texture of politics, how and by what means are these evils to be restrained and corrected? What is to stay or check a flood of moral corruption, in all the walks of life? Once suppose the pulpit put to silence on these points, and what is the inevitable consequence? Together with declining moral principle, and the prevalence of ignorance and consequent obtuseness of moral feeling, there would come in a state of moral laxity endangering every interest, and corrupting every agency. The oath would lose its moral power and binding force, and false swearing, false voting, and reckless usurpation, would soon lay low in the dust every pillar of freedom and virtue.

Once more, to exclude the pulpit from the field of politics, is to abjure the government of God, and his control of the affairs of men.

The Most High God rules over the entire universe of

rational beings. The principles, laws, and penalties of his government are revealed in his word, and the pulpit is the annunciator and expounder of that word. Where the word of God may go, the pulpit may go. Where the pulpit is excluded, the word of God is excluded. If, then, the pulpit is excluded from the field of politics, the word of God, and of course the government and sovereignty of God, are excluded. If the pulpit must not preach politics, the Bible must not teach politics, and God must not control politics, nor call their actors to account.

But is this so? Are we informed of any district or province in the moral domain of Jehovah, where politicians have license to act as they please with impunity? It would almost seem as if they themselves believed that they had discovered such a territory. But the moral government of God extends over all rational creatures and all their actions. He will call political actors to account; he will open the book of their political history, the record of their public as well as private life. Even in respect to those measures and aims which are most purely political, and which are simply matters of human judgment and temporal interest, God takes knowledge of motives and aims. The minutest details of business are reached by that law which takes cognizance of every thought. The most exciting scenes and most intense emotions of party strife are all before the eye of God, and registered for account. Even rulers, in their highest elevation, and in the plenitude of their power, are but servants who must give an account of their stewardship.

The attempt to exclude the pulpit from the field of politics is therefore an attempt to exclude the God of the pulpit from one province of his moral kingdom. It is the same, in effect, as to say that Jehovah has no concern with it; that divine authority and supremacy are suspended in respect to political proceedings; that moral obligation or Christian duty may not be enforced, or even explained,

any farther than politicians are pleased to permit. This is, in effect, to resign the moral government of God to them, so that, when we say, "The Lord reigneth, let *the earth* rejoice," we must add, "politicians excepted!" And who does not see that if the moral responsibility of politicians be excepted, all other moral responsibility must go with it, and thus Jehovah, as a moral sovereign, be dethroned?

But it may still appear to some to be *inexpedient*, though it be lawful, for the pulpit to enter the field of politics, or meddle with any thing within it. There may be those who are ready to ask, Are there not aspects of that field which are unseemly and repulsive even to its notice? things too base and corrupt for clerical handling? And will not the pulpit be more likely to be useful, as the instrument of saving souls, to abstain entirely from all such topics?

These are questions of such magnitude that they can be safely answered only by an appeal to the Scriptures. What men of God have done, or have been directed to do, in such cases, makes clear the true expediency of the matter. Whether the pulpit be represented by prophets, apostles, or ordinary teachers, acting under a special or ordinary commission, the principle is the same. If there be inherent wrong, imprudence, or inexpediency in a spiritual teacher's treating of political affairs, in one case, there must be in all cases. If holy men of God, under divine guidance, did not hesitate to take politics in hand, as watchmen of Zion and expounders of the Bible, then the *principle* is determined — the question remains no longer open.

It will be taken for granted, that, as the pulpit is but the symbol or instrument of divine communication, and derives all its importance from that use, it may properly be considered as substantially identical with all other means or instruments used for the same purpose. In other

words, the *pulpit* denotes religious, moral, and spiritual teachers of every grade, and their instructions, in whatever manner imparted.

We refer, then, first to Jeroboam, the king of Israel, who adopted, as a leading measure of his administration, the worship of the two golden calves, at Bethel and at Dan. The policy of this measure was, to divert public attention from the stated worship and instruction of the temple at Jerusalem. The king of Israel thus betrayed his own conviction that the pulpit had a duty to perform towards politics, because he had no hope of corrupting the people but by first corrupting religion. A venal and idolatrous ministry was the chosen and chief instrument of his wicked rule, whereby he made Israel to sin.

But this policy was displeasing to God. He therefore sent a prophet to rebuke the crime, and to denounce the judgments of offended Heaven upon it. The prophet came to Bethel, and, in the presence of the king and his court, cried against the altar, while the king was standing by it to offer incense to the idol. Did that prophet preach politics? So, it seems, Jeroboam understood it; and, like other rebuked and thwarted politicians, he was offended. He had no liking for political preachers, and sought to apprehend and punish the faithful servant of God. In hot haste and wrath the king stretched forth his hand from the altar, saying, "Lay hold on him!" But his hand withered, and he was fain to seek relief by an appeal to the pity of the prophet himself. Not content with this experiment, the king next attempted to corrupt the man of God by his hospitality. What he could not do by power, he hoped to effect by flattery; he would bribe him whom he could not frighten. In this attempt, also, he signally failed. This instance affords an example of the relation of the pulpit to politics, under special divine direction. And the story of the "old prophet," who finally seduced him into error, is not destitute of instruction in this connection.

This "old prophet" and his sons, being residents at Bethel, had witnessed the doings of Jeroboam in his attempt to corrupt and mislead the people. But, so far as appears, they gave no warning and made no remonstrance. The old prophet either remained silent, or, if he exercised his office at all, he was careful to avoid the courtly topic of the golden calf; though it was a topic pertaining to his office, and most immediately and deeply interesting to the nation. He might have been, in the worldly sense, prudent. For it was hazardous to all worldly interests to oppose a man of Jeroboam's power and shrewdness. It is very probable that he did not believe in the propriety of preaching politics. He thought it rather becoming to confine himself to a safer and more profitable field of labor. Having the reputation, and probably the stipend of a prophet, he was content to keep his place and support his family in dignified quiet, while all his neighbors were plunging into idolatry. Or he may have been a man of great modesty and moderation. He was not so self-conceited as to suppose that he knew more than all his cotemporaries. Especially, he could not presume to put himself in competition with Jeroboam, the great man of the age, and the hero of the nation. Besides, he was a man of peace; the church, he thought, needed rest, and would be injured by controversy. And, much as he deprecated idolatry in the abstract, he saw no way for its suppression in existing circumstances; and the easiest and safest way, in his view, was to be conservative and keep still. If, at any time, he was hardly pressed by conscience, he could silence its remonstrances by referring to the example of Aaron at Horeb. Golden calves were a Bible institution, so far as that a good man had made one, and the Bible had recorded the fact.

The old prophet, therefore, felt reprovèd and chagrined by the boldness and faithfulness of his younger brother. And instead of joining with him, and strengthening his

hands in the work of reform, or, at least, in an honest testimony to the truth, he set himself by deceit to ensnare the man of God, and involve him in trouble. The old prophet stands recorded on the inspired page as a deceiver and a traitor. He is a warning to all reputed prophets, old and young, of the evil consequences of tampering with political sins, of holding their peace when they should speak, or of using the sacred office only for purposes of personal ease and temporal advantage.

The subsequent history, also, of the man of God himself, who was seduced by falsehood to disobey his orders to his temporal ruin, holds up a warning to all the servants of Jehovah entrusted with his message, and under his orders, that they turn not aside at the suggestion of pretended friends, even though they may have the office and repute of "old prophets."

Asa, king of Judah, though in the main a good and wise prince, committed the political and moral error of making a league with the king of Syria. At that time Hanani, the seer, came to him and said: "Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly, therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Did not Hanani preach politics in so doing?

If Asa, in his offended pride, resented the seeming intrusion, and rewarded the faithfulness of his friend and spiritual guide with a prison, the fact only illustrates the tendencies of fallen nature, when left to itself. It proves neither the king's wisdom nor the prophet's imprudence, but rather confirms our conviction that there was need of a special warning from Heaven to recall the erring mon-

arch from his departure from God. And it further evinces that he was in a wrong state of mind, when it is added, "Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time." Oppression and impatience under reproof are very often found in company.

The prophet Elijah, in his day, had much occasion to deal with politics, because he lived in evil times, during the reign of some of the worst of Israel's kings.

Ahab sold himself to work wickedness against God and his people. He established idolatry by law, and used all the influence of his station and authority to corrupt the nation. Such was his open and avowed policy. Against this policy Elijah was commissioned to bear public and solemn testimony. And when accused by Ahab of being a troubler of Israel, that is to say, an intermeddler, and agitator, he replied, "*I* have not troubled Israel, but *thou* and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Did Elijah preach politics? Was he a traitor?

And not only did Elijah preach politics, but he followed it with corresponding action. He put the whole retinue of Baal's priesthood to the trial. He prevailed against them and abolished the system. In so doing he awakened the bitter resentment of Jezebel, the powerful and malignant patroness of the prevalent policy. With bitter vindictiveness she denounced the political prophet and his agitations, and, woman and queen though she was, declared with an oath that her vengeance should be satiated with his blood. Was Elijah a rebel? Was he out of his place? Was he guilty of sedition and outrage? Or was he faithfully serving his country and his God?

In the reign of Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, the same policy was adopted that had distinguished the preceding administration. It was idolatry, from the throne to the cottage.

Ahaziah fell sick, and sent to inquire of Baalzebub,

the god of Ekron, as to the issue of his disease. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron?" "Now therefore, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." When this message was reported to the king, and he was informed that it came through Elijah, the man of God, he was incensed, not at his own wickedness, but at his faithful reprovcr. He regarded the message as constructive treason, and proceeded to order out a military force to arrest the rebel. But Elijah cast himself on the protection of his God, and was delivered. Was Elijah in the right while thus interfering with the king and his affairs, or was he a rebel? Doubtless the king and his courtiers, and all interested politicians would affirm the latter. But this is not the decision of Elijah's God, by whose order he acted, and by whose power he was defended.

In another instance the political ministration of Elijah was remarkable and instructive. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and walked in all the sins of the house of Ahab. His policy was unjust and cruel, and eminently calamitous to himself and to the nation. To secure himself from rival claims, he slew all his brethren, the princes of Judah. Edom and Libnah revolted. And while the public affairs were falling into confusion, he devoted himself to the promotion of idolatry, and its attendant licentiousness. In this posture of public affairs, the patriotism of God's prophet was aroused. And while this profligate king probably took care not to come within reach of his vocal ministrations, there came to him a writing from Elijah, saying, "Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat, thy father, nor in the ways of Asa, king of Judah, but hast walked in the

ways of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab; and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself; behold with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods, and thou shalt have great sickness." (2 Chron. 21 : 12.)

This, it must be confessed, was plain dealing with a wicked ruler. And though it was not from the pulpit, *viva voce*,—though it was a protest or remonstrance sent in writing, it was nevertheless the testimony of the pulpit. It was also in the name and by authority of the God of Heaven, so that the duty and expediency of the measure are placed beyond question. The circumstances of this example are all in illustration of the truth that the pulpit has a duty in relation to politics, both as an auxiliary and a reprover.

The history of Elisha, the successor of Elijah, and a faithful witness against prevalent political corruption, gives similar instruction.

On one occasion, Elisha had conferred a great favor upon his nation in disclosing the secret counsels of their enemies, and thereby frustrating their designs. The Syrians, exasperated thereby, rallied all their forces to reduce Samaria by siege. An extreme scarcity was soon felt in the city. The king, instead of resorting to the prophet and his god for succor, flew into a rage, laid all the blame to Elisha, and uttered a profane threat against his life. Thus selfish and wicked men deal with God's ministers. Their services they forget, their reproofs they resent, and, one way or the other, they will inculcate their agency, and find, or make occasion to regard and treat them with abuse.

Amaziah, king of Judah, having invaded Edom, brought away the gods of the land, and set them up as his own.

For this the anger of the Lord was kindled against him; and a prophet was sent to say to him, "Why hast thou sought after the gods which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?" "And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, 'Art thou made of the king's counsel? Forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten?' Then the prophet forbore, and said, 'I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.'" Here was a servant of God accused of intrusion and threatened with stripes, for delivering a message of God in rebuke of idolatry, because the chief ruler had made it a part of his politics. The prophet preached politics undoubtedly, and he did it by divine command; and the king's rejection of the reproof was the harbinger of his ruin.

The prophet Amos was sent of God to rebuke the sins of Israel, during the reign of the second Jeroboam. This Jeroboam had a priest at Bethel, superintending the worship of the golden calf. The name of this priest was Amaziah. "Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel and it is the king's court."

Here again we behold a minister of religion reproofing political sins, and political men and their minions smarting under such reproof. Jeroboam and his idolatrous priest resented the prophet's interference. Idolatry was a national institution; its seat was at Bethel, where it had the patronage of the king and his court. It could

not be spoken against without assailing the politics of the government. Therefore, if the prophet must deliver his message, they insisted that he should flee away into the land of Judah, and prophesy there. The prophet, so far from being frightened by this menace or convinced by this logic, repeated his message with greater emphasis, and added a special denunciation upon the pliant priest of Bethel.

A more pleasing instance of obedience to the message of God's ambassador occurred in the reign of Josiah, king of Judah.

The word of God had been neglected, and its teachings had so far fallen into desuetude that its very existence was forgotten. It was lost in the lumber and rubbish of the temple. The consequence was that the government and the people had gone far astray. The preceding reigns of Manasseh and Amon had been devoted to idolatry. Josiah commenced a reformation; but he proceeded with faltering steps, and without the hearty concurrence of the people. They needed light; and the lamp of the word was hidden among the stuff.

At length, in repairing the house of God, Hilkiah, the high priest, found the book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses. It was brought to the knowledge of the king and read before him. The effect on the king was most happy. He commanded the priest and his assistants to inquire of the Lord for him, and for them that were left in Judah, concerning the book that was found: that is to say, he commanded them to inquire for the meaning of the word of God, and its application to their case. The response was a very severe rebuke. "Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will bring evil on this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah; because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke me to

anger with all the works of their hands: therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched."

This admonition was followed by immediate reformation. The elders of the people were convened, the words of the book recited to them, and the king and all his realm entered into a solemn covenant with the God of their fathers.

Here was no flouting, nor threatening about preaching politics; but the word of God was received with all readiness of mind, and the consequence was, a national reformation, and, for the time, a national salvation.

The prophet Jeremiah, during several succeeding reigns, found occasion to deal largely with politics in his public ministrations. His was the unenviable lot to bear public testimony against the prevalent sins of the government and the nation, and to incur the odium and ill usage commonly attendant on such a duty. Nevertheless, he was a true prophet, a loyal citizen, and a genuine patriot. The rulers of the nation had made a deep plunge into all the wonted immoralities of idolatry, and the judgments of God were gathering over the land. Already premonitions of their coming were heard in the distance. Of these warnings Jeremiah was the appointed herald. Consequently his great and almost exclusive work was to preach politics, and to preach it in the most offensive form. He was by office a political reprovcr, both of government and people.

The king of Babylon was advancing from the north and east with a mighty army of invasion and conquest. The question then was, Shall the invader be resisted, — shall Jerusalem be defended, or shall submission be conceded? The king of Judah and his counselors decided upon the former alternative as the only manly and patriotic course; but Jeremiah was divinely directed to inculcate a different line of policy, and insist on submission to the king of

Babylon as the only means of national safety. The reasons for this course were cogent and conclusive. The truth was, the rulers and people of Judah had a controversy with their God. The nation had gone far astray, had provoked their God to the degree which required a chastisement in vindication of the divine honor, as connected with their history. And now God gave them the alternative either to humble themselves under his mighty hand, by submission to the king of Babylon, and thus prevent a siege, a sack, and a captivity, or to resist the appointed instrument of divine displeasure, and suffer the consequences. The rulers and people of Judah did not recognize God in their calamities; they saw only the instrument by which he wrought his pleasure among them. In doing this they committed a great political error,—one very common in human politics. The hand of God is not seen nor acknowledged by men of mere worldly wisdom; their controversy with God is not regarded or provided for; therefore their measures of defense are often the most direct and certain means of their ruin. Jeremiah exhorted them to submit to the rod of divine correction, wielded by the king of Babylon, and assured them that it would be a lengthening of their tranquillity.

But the politicians of that day and nation were men that regarded neither God nor his prophets. They were wise in their own eyes, and left to that judicial blindness and infatuation which always presages an overthrow. They rejected the instructions of God by his servant; and not only so, they proceeded to arrest and punish the prophet as a disturber of the peace, as a traitor, a rebel. He was thrown into a dungeon, at the peril of his life. The charge against him was, that he preached politics; which was unquestionably true. But was he criminal and treacherous in acting according to a divine command, and in pointing out the only path of safety? What was the result, but the confirmation of the prophet's message, and

the defeat of his opponents? A long and destructive siege, a demolished city, a rifled temple, a subjected nation, and a captivity of seventy years, proclaim to the world that the pulpit has a legitimate concern with politics; and that its admonitions can not be safely neglected.

We may adduce, lastly, the example of Ezra. He was a priest, a lineal descendant of Aaron. To him had been entrusted the care of conducting the people on their return from captivity. It appeared that sundry of their leaders had adopted, and were carrying out the policy of amalgamation with the nations around. By this departure from the law of the Lord, Ezra, its expounder and teacher, was greatly moved, and through his influence effective measures were taken for the removal of the evil. On another occasion he preached publicly in exposition of the law in its bearings upon the civil as well as the religious affairs of the nation, and received from the people that deference and obedience which showed how clearly they recognized his right to speak on all matters of duty in the name of Jehovah.

The New Testament is no less explicit in its instructions concerning this matter. Some of its recorded examples and teachings are the following:

John the Baptist was the harbinger of Christ, the connecting link between the old and new dispensations.

What relation had the pulpit, in the person of John, to politics? The chief ruler, in his day, was an unprincipled, profligate man, and a cruel tyrant. He had taken his brother's wife to himself; and thus, not only as an individual person, but as a ruler, a public man, was living in open violation of the moral law. Here then the question was fairly at issue, whether political rank was to be a cover for immorality, and a bar to reproof from the minister of religion. And in the example of John, we have his judgment of the case. John might easily have kept himself aloof from political scenes; he might have con-

fined himself to the wilderness, and to his homely fare, and have left kings and courts to themselves, if he had been desirous of an excuse. But here was a great public crime, and here was the pulpit, in the keeping of John; and he was not the man to shrink from responsibility. "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife," was his fearless utterance. "But it cost the Baptist his head," says the politician, and the conservative preacher. True, and if any person prefers the favor of the tyrant to the fidelity and fortune of the martyr, he is at undoubted liberty to take his choice. But if any professed servant of God had said to John, "It were better for you to have preached the gospel, and told sinners what they must do to be saved, than to be thus meddling with politics;" we can easily imagine the reply which this fearless preacher of righteousness would have made to him.

Will it be said that John did not preach politics distinctly, but simple morality? The answer is, he preached both in one, because the crime of Herod had political bearings and effects. This is a very common case. Moral questions and principles are so interwoven with political issues, as to be incapable of separation. Might not the partisans of Herod have said to John, "You are meddling with political affairs in your preaching; you injure the popularity of our king; you weaken his influence and raise prejudice against his government, by exposing his faults, and reproving his vices?" Might they not have said to him, "Whatever be your motives or your weapons, however pure the one or spiritual the other, the effect is the same; our party is damaged, our measures are interfered with?" If John might have been, and perhaps was considered an intruder and offender by politicians of his day, his example is suggestive of what is becoming to ministers of religion in all similar cases. It shows that honesty and fidelity will not allow them to keep silence on questions of vital interest to all sound morality and

piety; even though the performance of duty cost the sacrifice of favor, earthly interest, or life itself.

Politics, in the time of our Saviour and in the field of his ministry, related for the most part to questions and observances pertaining to the ritual law. The paying of tribute to Cæsar had indeed its place, as a mere secular topic, and was easily disposed of by the Great Teacher. "Let Cæsar have his own, and let God have his own," was a platform of policy worthy of its author, however little it might comport with the views of those who propounded the question. But the main and exciting inquiries of the day among the Jews were, what would give ascendancy to Pharisees, Sadducees, or Herodians; by what means each sect or party might take the honors and the spoils. These questions of course involved moral principles, and the popular solution involved much immoral practice. One issue was, whether form and name were not the same as reality and substance; whether the letter was not the same as the spirit. Another was the question, whether the apparent avoidance of one sin, or excess of sanctity in one point, gave license for any degree of iniquity in all other points; whether frequent fasts and long prayers in the corners of the streets would afford a license to destroy widows' houses, and bind heavy burdens; whether "corban," labeled on an ostentatious gift or pretended charity, would relieve the vain practitioner from the claims of social and moral obligation? These and such like questions were the political issues, in the days of Christ's public ministry among the Jews. Did Christ deal with them, or did he not? Did he consider them forbidden topics of public instruction and reproof, because interwoven with the political issues of the time? Did he not rather, on that very account, take them in hand and treat them in the plainest and most pointed manner? Let any one read the appeals and rebukes of our Saviour, addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the rulers and leaders

of the people, the political men of the day, and then let him say, if he can in truth, that Jesus Christ never preached politics; or that he avoided great moral questions of principle or practice, because of their political connections.*

It is not necessary to the present purpose to claim that the ministers of Christ, being fallible men, would be justified in saying all that he said, or doing all that he did. All that is claimed is, the right and duty of the pulpit to bring truth to bear on the moral principles involved in politics. And surely, if there is any inherent wrong in the practice, any intrusion, any officious meddling in the case, the sanction of Christ's example would have been withheld, and the practice prohibited. Can the example of our Lord and Master comport with that reserve and silence in relation to political affairs, which by many are esteemed to be the height of wisdom? And if such caution is according to the will of Christ, why is not an exception made in the commission, "Preach the gospel to every creature?" Why did not the Master say, "Preach the gospel, except where and when it will cross the path of political aspirants, or expose and reprove the sins of political leaders?"

If then a criminal charge can be brought against the pulpit, on the ground that it interferes with politics, it must lie, with equal propriety and force, against Him whom the pulpit is commanded to follow. In this view

*It is true that the scepter had departed from Judah when Jesus Christ, the Shiloh, had come in the flesh. The Roman was the paramount authority. The Jews, however, had some relics of political power blended with their ecclesiastical forms. To both forms of politics our Lord addresses himself, in his ministry. To the former, in the message which he sent to Herod, when he said, Go and tell that fox, &c., and in the declaration made to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above,"—(John 19 : 11) He treated politics in the Jewish form, as already stated.

the charge of course refutes itself, and recoils upon those by whom it is preferred.

It is next in order to inquire how this subject was understood and treated by the apostles of our Lord.

Shortly after the ascension of Christ, two of the apostles, Peter and John, were apprehended and brought before the great Council of the nation to answer for their preaching. And what did they preach?—That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had been wickedly rejected, persecuted, and crucified, at the instigation of the rulers and the people; and therefore, that the violent death of this person was an event for which they were responsible.—Why was this preaching offensive to the Council? Because they were conscious of its truth, and because it exposed and reprov'd their cherished policy. Their politics, at the time, were directed to the utter suppression of the doctrine and faith of Christ. The preaching of the apostles was therefore as pointedly and offensively political as any preaching could be. It attacked and condemned their favorite measures, thwarted their plans, and brought the blood of an innocent man upon their consciences. They of course felt a lively interest in preventing the apostles from handling such topics as these.

After consultation, they called the apostles and commanded them not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus. Here the political authorities came into direct conflict with the ministry. The higher powers put themselves in hostile array against the mandate of the King of kings. They ventured to commit themselves and their politics to the suppression of what the God of heaven and the King of Zion had undertaken to defend and promote. How did the apostles understand their rights and duties in such a crisis? Did they concede to usurpation? Did they submit to the secular powers in such a conflict of claims? Far from it. "Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God

to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we can not but speak the things we have seen and heard."

Being let go, they went to their own company and made report. The whole company united with them in praising God, for the grace given them to suffer for his name's sake. They continued in supplication for more grace, that, with all boldness, they might continue to speak and preach the word of truth. And they did continue to preach Jesus and the resurrection, notwithstanding the political interdict under which they were laid.

On a subsequent occasion, these same preachers of politics, and their associates, were arrested by the civil power and lodged in the common prison. But their divine Patron sent his angel to open the prison doors and bring them out; and he said to them, "Go stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life." They did so. Again they were arrested, and brought by the officers and set before the Council, who sternly reprimanded them: "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood on us." Peter offered the same defense as before; viz., "We ought to obey God rather than men." And he failed not to improve the occasion to bring home to their consciences the prohibited doctrine of Jesus, and to bear emphatic testimony to his truth. When the rulers heard this they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay the apostles. But their rage yielded at last to the wise suggestions of Gamaliel, and the prisoners were dismissed. And they went from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.

This was a severe test of the rights and functions of the pulpit, and a signal triumph of its faithfulness and truth. Had the apostles shrunk from duty, had they been

conservative and time-serving, the result must have been very different, both to themselves and to the cause of Christ. If politicians had prevailed to silence the pulpit then, where had been the gospel in after ages?

The history of Stephen affords another illustrious example of similar fidelity.

Let it not be forgotten that Judaism furnished the materials of the popular politics of that day. It was in its service that ambitious men sought emolument and power. It is no purpose to say that this is no question of politics now. Politics differ with circumstances and places.

The question of Christ's Messiahship was a question of the continuance of the Jewish state and polity. To preach it was to proclaim a new kingdom which should supplant the ancient constitution of the nation, and abide for ever. It was, besides, totally subversive of all the systems of false religion, and all the idolatry and superstition of the age. For this reason the Jews hated Christianity; for this reason the Pagans hated it, and considered it as much opposed to their political views and interests as to their religious faith. And, though the form and name of opposition have changed since, yet there is the same spirit, and substantially the same reason for opposition now. And if the complaints against the pulpit for preaching politics were analyzed, and traced to their source, they would be found to contain much of the old leaven of opposition to Christ and his doctrine. It is important to know this truth, that the nature of these complaints may be appreciated, and that the effort to illustrate the rights and duties of the pulpit, by examples from the Bible, may not be suspected of wandering from the point, and introducing examples not relevant or applicable.

Stephen was an able and eloquent advocate of the doctrine of Christ. He stood forth in its defense, and thus, without intending any aggression, he was denounced as a

political agitator. He is thus described on the inspired page:—

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people,” If any evidence were needed to show what sort of preacher he was, or that he was objected to, as a political preacher, in the ordinary sense, we find that evidence in the character of his accusers. They were of the very class who are always soonest offended by the Christian doctrine, in application to their state and practice. They were the restless, unreasonable, carping politicians of that day and place, examples of their class in every age. “Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.” Being thus foiled in argument, they betook themselves to the common resort of all weak, indefensible causes, and all defeated advocates of such causes, viz., misrepresentation and violence. They suborned men to be false witnesses against Stephen. They stirred up the people and the rulers and the scribes, and came upon him and caught him, and brought him to the Council, and laid many grievous offenses to his charge. In short, they made a great agitation and uproar, and held Stephen responsible for the whole.

The crisis had now come, when he must either yield to false accusation, retract all that he had said and done, or, sustained by an approving conscience, and casting himself on the protection of his Lord, stand his ground, and bear a martyr's testimony to the truth. If Stephen had been conscious of any fault; if he had been guilty of any imprudence; if he had abused the privileges of his office; if his zeal had led him beyond the bounds of propriety; if he had failed to render due respect to the higher powers; this was the time and the place to recant. What

then do we hear from this man of God? Did he express regret? Did he take back one word, or modify one statement, to please his enemies, or to screen himself? Let every one read his plea, recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts, and judge for himself.

The reiteration of such a political discourse, with so pointed an application, produced a marked effect, such as might be anticipated. "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. They cried out with a loud voice, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out, and stoned him to death." They used the logic of all weak and defeated causes; while the holy man employed his last breath in praying for them, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

In this example the rights and duty of the pulpit, in relation to politics, are fully asserted and sealed with a martyr's blood.*

The apostle Paul, in his missionary travels, came to Thessalonica. As his manner was, "he went into the synagogue, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures; opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." This

* If it should be objected to these views that the Jewish High Priest and Sanhedrim had no political power in the days of Stephen, —I reply, that while the supreme power had passed from the Jews to the Romans, they were still allowed by favor to administer their own laws, civil and ecclesiastical, so far as they did not interfere with Roman authority or extend to capital punishment.

The case of Gallio, a Roman deputy at Corinth, is an illustration. Gallio said to the Jews, "If it be a question of words or names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters." To a certain extent their politics were blended with ecclesiastical forms among the Jews, and constituted a part of their system.

was political preaching in a city of the Gentiles, though confined at first to the resident Jews. It was understood to be political preaching, and objected to as such. A mob was collected by the unbelieving Jews, and "certain rude fellows of the baser sort," who complained to the authorities: "These," said they, "that have turned the world upside down, have come hither also. Whom Jason hath received, and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying there is another king, one Jesus." Here the political feature of Paul's preaching comes to view. However little he had thought of politics, and however little occasion there was to accuse him for meddling therewith, yet to his audience it was political preaching, contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, and bringing forward a rival to him as king. So now, it is impossible to preach the gospel faithfully, and not encounter the same complaint. He however did not hesitate as to his duty. He had received his commission from a higher than human authority, and he shrunk not from executing it faithfully, "not shunning," in his own noble words, "to declare the whole counsel of God." His example so recorded, and commended by Christ's manifested presence with him, and by the approbation of mankind in all ages, is our sufficient warrant in all similar cases.

In some cases political questions, or those esteemed such, are found bound up with immoral practices for the sake of unjust gain. Parties based upon these, worshipping at the shrine of mammon, are, beyond all others, intolerant of opposition. From these, the pulpit, dealing in reproofing and corrective truth, is wont to receive most bitter persecution.

The apostle Paul had ample experience of hostility from this quarter. In his travels, he came to Philippi, preaching the gospel. In that city was a company of persons who were practicing upon the superstition and credulity of the people, and making money by the arts of

a soothsayer whom they had in their keeping, and probably claimed as their property. This damsel put herself repeatedly in the way of the apostle, and annoyed him with her equivocal laudation. At length, Paul, lamenting her miserable condition, and indignant at the iniquitous imposture of which she was the unhappy instrument, rebuked the evil spirit, and restored her to health. The result is most graphically told. "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, saying, 'these men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, being Romans.'" Here is the old complaint of political preaching applied to a work of mercy. Their accusers dare not tell the truth, because it would expose their malignant fraud. They were ashamed to confess their base motives; and so, to be revenged, they must involve the whole city and raise a political issue about Roman customs. The usual effects of such a procedure followed. "And the multitude rose up together against them,—the preachers,—and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them they cast them into the prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

In glancing over this narrative we see that the apostle acted in perfect consistency with his office and mission, in relieving a fellow creature from Satanic influence, and in thus ending a vile traffic. That their accusers made a false charge, to cover their own iniquity, is equally evident. They dare not bring their cause to trial on its own merits: they charged a political offense solely with the design to blind the magistrates and excite the multitude. Their pretenses were all deceptive and malicious.

They pretended to be concerned for the peace of the city, which they only had disturbed and long abused. They arrogantly claimed to be *the city*, and their cause the public good, when they were only a knot of pestilent depredators, who lived by plundering the public. They assumed that they were the only patriots, and the keepers of Roman dignity and customs, and that all that opposed them were traitors and fanatics.

It is also observable, that Paul and his companion gave no heed to these false accusations. They neither retreated nor retracted, but quietly submitted to the storm, and in the end had no reason to regret their course.

If preaching politics be admitted to be a valid objection against the pulpit, then, as in this case, every selfish and immoral scheme will avail itself of this plea, and shelter itself under this pretense. If politics be forbidden to the pulpit, every thing will be called politics which selfish men do not like to hear. It is very probable that if much of the complaint against political preaching were traced to its true source, it would be found to originate in motives as unworthy as those which instigated the mob at Philippi. Oppression and fraud dare not set up a plea in their own name, and on the merits of their own cause. They must put on the guise of politics. They seem to be deeply concerned for the peace and union of the community; they have awful forebodings of civil dissolution and commotion, when there is none existing or to be feared, but of their own making.

If then the question occurs, What shall the pulpit do, when it is beset with such accusations? the answer is, Do as Paul did; preach the truth, the whole truth; cast out the evil spirits; bear testimony against evil works: and if unprincipled men call it politics, let them call it so; if they raise a storm, submit to it quietly; if they cast you into prison, go thither and pray and sing in the hearing of the prisoners. God can make the wrath of man to

praise him. And those who trust him in the faithful performance of duty, will have reason, as Paul and Silas had, to be thankful for their sufferings. It is not to be forgotten that a flourishing church, in which Paul took great satisfaction, arose at this very city, and in connection with this political preaching.

Another incident in the history of the apostle is so illustrative of the truth now in view, that it can not in justice be omitted.

In Ephesus, one of the chief cities of Asia Minor, was the magnificent temple of the goddess Diana—accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. This temple and its rites brought together vast multitudes of people, and gave employment to many tradesmen and artificers. They furnished the chief business of the city, and constituted a principal element in its politics.

Among others who thrived by these means was one Demetrius, a silversmith. He had established himself, under the auspices of the tutelar goddess, as a manufacturer of silver shrines, or models of the temple and the idol. These were in great demand by pilgrims and devotees that came thither to worship; and the manufacture of them was, therefore, a profitable business to a portion of the citizens.

Into this famous city came the apostle Paul, preaching Christ. A great commotion was speedily excited. The deep foundations of idolatry were shaken by the power of the gospel, and they who made gain from the ignorance and vice of the multitude were alarmed. Their craft was in danger. They banded together accordingly to resist and expel this aggression. And what did they conclude to do? Did they come forward honorably and frankly, and plead their personal interest? Did they say that this preaching and this moral reform were likely to injure the secular business of a number of them, who had fattened on public vice? No, for this would be too bare-

faced even among heathen and idolaters. Accusation of political preaching would be far more effective. Suddenly they were seized with a great zeal for the honor of Diana. They could not bear to see their city and their religion suffer. They could not brook any dishonor done to either. Hear what this band of patriots have to say in the fullness of their zeal: "The temple of the great goddess Diana will be despised, and her magnificence be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth." As usual, an angry mob was gathered, and Paul was denounced as a political agitator, a fanatic, a disturber of the public peace, an enemy to the city and country. The real offense was, that the gospel, which Paul preached, exposed their iniquity; and, by undermining the idolatry of the place, dried up the sources of their wealth. It was, with them, a question of pecuniary profit solely; and their motive was selfish and sordid. Paul had said nothing of their craft, nor yet of their idol: nevertheless he must be held responsible for any construction they were pleased to put on his preaching. He understood this, and therefore disregarded the complaint. The "town clerk" also understood it, and vindicated the course of the apostle, and dismissed the people. The consequence of Paul's labors in Ephesus, notwithstanding these complaints and outbreaks, was the conversion of many persons, and the gathering of a large and prosperous church.

Whether, therefore, we regard this subject in the light derived from the acknowledged design of civil government, the instructions and precepts of the Scriptures respecting the pulpit, or the inspired examples given as to its administration, we are led to the same conclusion. The moral government of God is supreme over men in *all* the relations of human life; and the PULPIT, as its appointed ambassador and representative, is divinely charged with the full and clear enforcement of its claims in all

circumstances whatsoever. It is to speak ever, with the dignity and solemnity befitting its exalted character; it is to avoid extravagance and misguided zeal; winning if possible by persuasion—yet fearing not to use, if need be, the sterner tones of rebuke; shunning not to declare to men—both the rulers and the ruled—the whole counsel of God. Thus doing, it becomes the firmest ally and support of government; and politics, thus instructed and purified, becomes a department of the highest ethics. The Christian statesman and Christian minister meet in fraternal accord, as among the chief benefactors of society.

“The pulpit, in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers,
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support and ornament of virtue’s cause.”

EK

